



**PUMPKINS AREN'T
JUST FOR CARVING**
TRY THE GOURD IN
THESE TARTS {page 14}

YULE LAUGH

PUTTING THE TINSEL IN TINSELTOWN

{page 11}



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**Wednesday,
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Arson behind Slave Lake fire

🔴 Total fire damage pegged at \$700M 🔴 Many residents who lost their houses will be spending winter in temporary mobile homes

Dwayne Verschoor can't imagine why someone would have wanted to spark a forest fire that nearly wiped out his small Alberta town.

But the Slave Lake resident wants the culprit caught and punished.

"The most you can do would be put him in jail," said Verschoor. "I would string him up on Main Street — but we're supposed to be civilized people."

The Alberta government announced yesterday that an unknown arsonist recklessly or deliberately ignited the raging forest fire that reduced a third of Slave Lake to rubble on May 15. The blaze destroyed 400 homes and businesses and left 2,000 people homeless.

Frank Oberle, minister of sustainable resources, said the file has been turned over to the RCMP.

"It's extremely disappointing

Alberta fires

► **Causes.** Government stats show there are about 1,500 forest fires each year in Alberta. One-third are caused by lightning and the other two-thirds are accidentally sparked by humans.

► **Arson.** In the past five years, arson was linked to 25 forest fires in the province.

and my heart goes out to the people that lost homes or property," Oberle told a news conference.

"This further exacerbates that."

He said his investigators have ruled out all other possible causes for the fire. He wouldn't say how they've definitively ruled out that the blaze wasn't set accidentally, such as by a careless camper failing to properly extinguish a fire.

“Our investigation eliminated

all natural, industrial or accidental causes.”

Oberle said investigators have determined where the fire started, but he wouldn't give the co-ordinates because the scene is now part of a criminal investigation. He also wouldn't describe the area — whether it was near a campsite or deep in the bush.

"We know there was no lightning at that site, no power-line malfunction and no campfire located at that site, so a process of elimination gets us to the only reasonable conclusion."

The minister wouldn't say if there was forensic evidence found at the scene to suggest arson, but added that a deliberately set forest fire is "relatively rare." A spokesman for the department later clarified that there is some forensic evidence, but refused to elaborate.

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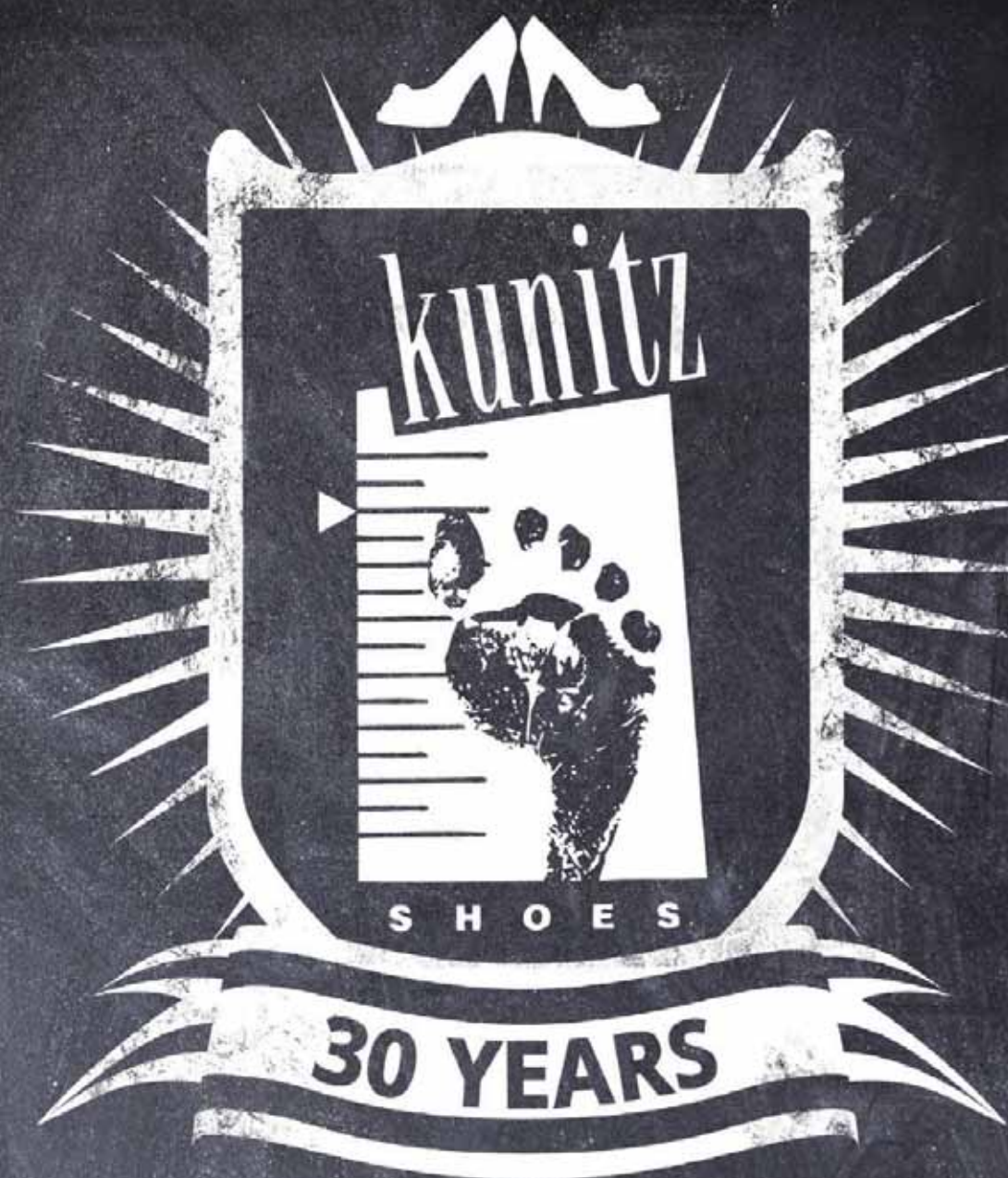
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EPSB puts money and teachers back into classrooms

Education funding reinvested by the premier will directly impact Edmonton Public Schools' classrooms through funding as well as retaining the equivalent of 298 teaching positions.

The board of trustees approved yesterday how to spend \$13.1 million, a piece of the \$107 million pie injected by Premier Alison Redford upon winning the PC leadership.

"We've decided and we're very excited that we're spending \$12.5 million of the \$13.1 million in schools," said board chair Dave Colburn.

Of that, \$2.2 million will go to class size reduction, especially in grades 4 to 6, \$3.7 million to special needs support and \$3.6 million to professional development.

In all, \$600,000 will fund resources that support schools. Following the release of the provincial budget, Colburn said it was likely 229 teaching positions would be lost.

Now that 298 can be retained and hired, it's "really exciting," said Colburn, adding the extra positions are due to increased enrolment.

The Edmonton Catholic School District received \$5.49 million, reducing class sizes, and funding special needs support, Alberta Initiative for School Improvement and English Language Learner programs.

● HEATHER MCINTYRE



► Damian Joy, of Bilfinger Berger Project Investments, left, representing the private funding consortium, and Alberta Transportation Minister Ray Danyluk take the first spin on the new northwest roadway opened yesterday.

City's northwest passage open

► \$1.42B leg of ring road 90 per cent complete, adding 69 kilometres of light-free road ► New stretch expected to benefit 30,000 drivers daily



SHELLEY WILLIAMSON
@METRONEWS.CA

Some city drivers spent less time behind the wheel yesterday, with the northwest leg of Anthony Henday Drive opening.

The 21-kilometre stretch from Yellowhead Trail to Manning Drive welcomed traffic around 2 p.m., in time for the drive home.

"We are a commodity-based province and we have a province that is very vast and has a lot of land, and we need to be able to

get from one end of this province to the other," said Alberta Minister of Transportation Ray Danyluk. "The opening of this roadway also marks another step towards our goal of 800 kilometres of free flow traffic from Nanton to Grande Prairie."

Danyluk lauded the funding model — which will see Northwest Connect design, finance, build and maintain the road for 30 years, in Alberta's largest public-private venture.

"We would have never had this project done if it

By the numbers

- 50,000 cubic metres of concrete, 14 million cubic metres of earth, 14 million tonnes of aggregate, and 2.7 million man hours went into building the freeway since 2008.
- Five flyovers, 27 bridges, and two rail crossings are

part of the 69 kilometres that make up the northwest leg of Anthony Henday Drive.

- Four interchanges adjacent the northwest stretch — at Callingwood Road, Lessard Road, Stony Plain Road and Cameron Heights — are slated to open this month.

wasn't a P-3 project," said Danyluk.

The minister could not say if the remaining ring road segment, due to come full circle by 2015, will also be a private-public venture.

Damian Joy, president of Bilfinger Berger Project Investments, representing Northwest Connect, said the construction took 2.7 million man hours to complete.

1

news


A study of U.S. nurses broadens the apparent link between breast cancer and alcohol consumption to include light drinkers. Scan the code.

To scan 2D barcodes in Metro, download the free ScanLife app at 2dscan.com.

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metronews.ca

The month of October brought welcome relief to investors, but Allan Small warns that we're not out of the woods yet. More at metronews.ca/investing

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► Idling around schools and hospitals where signs say not to could result in a fine if the city moves forward on creating an anti-idling bylaw.

METRO FILE

Anti-idling law backed

► Idling more than 3 minutes in 30-minute period could cost \$250: Report



HEATHER MCINTYRE
METRO EDMONTON

With endorsement from school boards and Alberta

Health Services, the city is looking to move forward on an anti-idling bylaw.

Changes to the proposed geographical bylaw include enforcement at

schools and health facilities where there is signage — regardless of the temperature (except for emergency vehicles and the like).

A report before council committee today says next steps are to determine the number and placement of signs, then bring forward an amended bylaw.

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Public speaks out on school closures

Two possible school closures were on the books at last night's Edmonton Catholic Schools public board meeting.

Two parents pleaded to keep J.H. Picard school open.

Judith Frank presented a 1,004-signature petition against closing the existing school, as was voted for by the board last April.

"What it says in the petition is we'd like the board to return to the modernization plan, to renovate it," said Frank, who has two children at Picard.

Frank said the central location is preferred to moving the K-12 French

111

The number of students at St. Mark junior high

Immersion program to a new school or amalgamating students in other schools.

The board also voted 5-2 to consider closing a junior high school.

St. Mark school is on the table for closure due to low enrolment, said board chair Debbie Engel.

The Catholic board will host a public consultation about St. Mark on Jan. 19.

● SHELLEY WILLIAMSON

Heartland power line a go — two years later

Alberta's electricity regulator has given the green light to a controversial big-ticket transmission line to run around the provincial capital's eastern edge.

The Alberta Utilities Commission's decision on the \$596-million Heartland line yesterday comes two years after it was directed by the Alberta government to find the most cost-effective route for the substation and 240-kilovolt line.

The commission said the line, with minor changes, "is in the public interest having regard to the social and economic effects of the project and its effects on the environment."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

112 Avenue traffic set to tighten its belt?

LANE LABOUR. Traffic in the Highlands area is one step closer to going on a diet.

A council committee voted yesterday to consider reducing the number of lanes on 112 Avenue between 50 Street and 68 Street.

The vote means a year-long study will be done should construction be approved for the 2012 budget. Input would come from residents.

The idea, first considered in 2006, is to make the area more pedestrian-friendly.

● METRO



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► Chef Richard Julien of Chef Live carves a 600-pound pumpkin with a chainsaw at Halifax Seed yesterday.

HEATHER GILLIS/FOR METRO

Getting messy for a good cause

Julien says he plans to use the leftovers for this year's Pumpkins for Prostate pie-making fundraiser.

Manipulation is key in sex trade

► Police investigator says relationship is exploitative



JAMES TURNER

@METRONEWS.CA

METRO CANADA IN WINNIPEG

A mind for business, a measure of online savvy and a mendacious ability to manipulate using influence, not force.

These are among the attributes some who operate illegal sex-trade enterprises share, a report authored by a veteran Winnipeg police morals unit investigator suggests.

For more than a decade, Sgt. Gene Bowers has been

the city's go-to expert for police when it comes to probing Winnipeg's sex-trade underworld.

The Crown requested Bowers file a statement of opinion regarding the case of a woman awaiting sentencing for running a bawdy house in Winnipeg.

"There are a number of overt and oppressive strategies that bawdy-house keepers, escort services, massage parlour owners and pimps can use to procure people into prostitution or keep them

from leaving the sex-trade," Bowers said. But often, a common tactic operators employ to keep people working for them is to befriend them and let them believe they're engaged in a joint business relationship, he said.

"The relationship is exploitative but appears to be reciprocal on the surface," he stated. "As a result threats, violence or overt tactics are not required to have individuals continue on prostituting themselves while willingly turning over their money."

Soldier killed in Afghan blast brought home

FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS



► Kellar, Byron Greff's son, carries a flower to his father's casket.

The first Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since Canada ended its combat role in the war-torn country was returned to home soil yesterday.

Bagpipes played as the flag-draped coffin bearing Master Cpl. Byron Greff was carried across the tarmac at the Canadian Forces Base in Trenton, in eastern Ontario, and placed into a waiting hearse.

The soldier's widow, pushing her newborn daughter in a stroller, walked over to the hearse and placed two roses on the coffin. Her young son Kellar was then lifted up so he could add his own rose.

The youngster put an

arm around his mother's waist.

In Greff's hometown of Lacombe, Alta., hundreds of yellow ribbons were tied around posts in the community north of Red Deer.

Governor General David Johnston, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Chief of Defence Staff Walter

Training mission

- The Edmonton-based soldier was one of 17 people killed Saturday by a suicide bomber in Kabul.
- Master Cpl. Greff was among the 900 Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan as part of a mission to train military personnel in that country until 2014.
- His death brings the number of Canadian soldiers killed as a result of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan to 158.

Natynczyk also attended the late afternoon ceremony in Trenton.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

6th suspicious package found at party store

Bomb-squad robots were back at work at a Toronto costume store yesterday after two more suspicious packages were found at the business, bringing the total to six.

Police say officers checking Amazing Party and Costume found the sixth package around noon.

Toronto police Insp. Gerry Cashman says the devices had the potential to cause serious injuries and death along with property damage if they went off. The store was shut over the weekend.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cancer our biggest killer: SatsCan

A new report says cancer and heart disease were responsible for just over half of Canada's 238,617 deaths in 2008.

And Statistics Canada reports cancer was the leading cause of death in every province and territory for the first time.

The agency says heart disease was the second-leading cause of death in every province and territory in 2008 — except Nunavut, where suicide ranked second.

Cancer accounted for 30 per cent of all deaths in 2008.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian, family freed from Saudi jail

A Canadian man, his wife and two young children have been released after spending more than a month in a Saudi Arabian prison.

A senior government official says Majeed Uddin Ahmed and his family have been released on bail and given 25 days to leave Saudi Arabia.

The official says Canadian authorities are arranging travel documents so that the family can return to Canada. Canadian officials have said the charges were "minor," apparently related to alleged visa violations. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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► Angelina, left, and Angelica Sabuco are cuddled by mom Ginady Sabuco a day before the complex operation that separated them.

Surgeons give twins new lives

► Conjoined girls are separated in complex day-long operation

Angelina and Angelica Sabuco have just been given new lives — apart.

In the two years since they were born, the twin girls have been joined at the chest and abdomen.

But yesterday doctors at Stanford University's children's hospital in California separated them in a remarkable day-long operation.

The surgery on the two Philippines-born tots was expected to take nine hours. More than 20 doctors and nurses were taking part.

By mid-afternoon, hospital spokesperson Reena Mukamal announced the girls had been separated and

moved to their own operating rooms for the second phase of the procedure — reconstructing the area where they were connected.

Mukamal said doctors were pleased with the progress of the surgery so far. The complex operation involved cutting along the girls' skin and muscle and separating their diaphragms and livers.

Severing the liver was going to be the riskiest part of the procedure because of potential blood loss, said lead surgeon Dr. Gary Hartman before the operating room drama began.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"We want them to live normally. When they argue, they can be alone. When they play, they can play together or apart. When they don't want to see each other, they won't have to."

GINADY SABUCO, MOTHER

A black day for white-collar criminals

Fraudsters found guilty of white-collar crimes in Canada now face tougher sentences and penalties.

Ottawa officially introduced tougher rules yesterday to deal with Ponzi schemers and white-collar fraudsters, part of just-adopted Tory legislation first tabled in 2009.

Stiffer penalties include:
— A mandatory two-year prison sentence for fraud over \$1 million.

— Financial restitution for victims.

— Latitude for a judge to stiffen a sentence because of aggravating factors.

"This legislation stands up for victims of fraud and

"Individuals who perpetrate fraud will face sentences that match the severity of their crimes."

ROB NICHOLSON

makes it easier for them to seek the restitution that

they deserve," said Justice Minister Rob Nicholson.

The legislation will require judges to consider restitution and require a guilty party to repay victims. Those found guilty could also be barred from ever handling people's money again.

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Canuck auto sales are up, but not by much: Analyst

Automakers saw healthy Canadian sales growth last month as consumers appeared ready to shop for vehicles again after a slow September.

Canadian vehicle sales were up 2.1 per cent to 125,680 vehicles in October compared to 123,154 a year earlier, according to DesRosiers Automotive. That compared to a 0.4 per cent annual decline in September.

It has been an uneven year for automakers — one that is expected to finish with slightly higher sales than last year.

Consumer confidence has been shaky over fears the global economy could sink back into another recession, while rising oil and gas prices have been taking a bigger toll on finances.

Japanese automakers have also faced inventory shortages and production constraints since the earth-

quake and tsunami hit the island country in March.

Sales in Canada for the first 10 months of the year are up about 1.5 per cent at 1.3 million units.

"The reality is that, because our market is now back to a normal healthy level, that we're not going to get much in terms of sharp gains from here," said Scotiabank auto analyst Carlos Gomes.

Pent-up demand helped October sales for the Japanese automakers as drivers waiting for popular models were able to buy them as inventories improved. Gomes believes that incentive programs also helped to boost sales last month.

GM Canada managed to beat both Ford and Chrysler last month, though Ford Canada remains the top-selling automaker in the country so far this year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Comparing notes

- **GM Canada:** Nine per cent growth from last October, with 19,542 vehicles sold.
- **Ford Canada:** October sales fell 2.4 per cent to 19,190 units from a year earlier.
- **Toyota Canada:** Sales up three per cent, to 14,980 for October.
- **Honda Canada:** Sales fell 13 per cent year-over-year to 11,232 vehicle.
- **Kia Canada Inc.:** Sales up 15.4 per cent from a year ago to 5,180.
- **Volvo Cars of Canada Corp.:** Sales up 13 per cent to 490.
- **BMW Group Canada:** 2,863 retails in October, an increase of 1.1 per cent over October 2010.
- **Subaru Canada:** Monthly sales fell 4.8 per cent to 2,314 vehicles.
- **Hyundai Canada:** Sold 10,242 vehicles, a 12.1 per cent increase from a year ago.

Google ebooks store enters market

Google launched its ebooks platform in Canada yesterday, providing more competition for retailers Amazon and Kobo.

Titles purchased at the

Google ebooks store will be stored online and accessible on a variety of devices, including Android and Apple tablets and smartphones, PCs and compatible e-readers such as the Kobo, Barnes & Noble's Nook and Sony's Reader.

Hundreds of thousands of titles will be available for purchase at Google's store,

in addition to more than 2 million public domain books available for free, the company said in a release.

The Google store also boasts partnerships with publishers including Penguin, Random House, HarperCollins, House of Anansi, Dundurn and McGill Queens University Press. THE CANADIAN PRESS

► Protesters dressed as prisoners gathered outside the Greek parliament in Athens yesterday during an event against the government's proposed austerity measures.



Greek bailout referendum throws Europe for a loop

- Opposition has called for prime minister to resign
- Emergency talks arranged by Germany and France

Greece's prime minister held firm early today to his shock decision to call for a referendum on a hard-fought European debt deal, despite anger from abroad, market turmoil across the world and dissent from within his own party.

George Papandreou's government still faced a battle for survival, with a vote of confidence scheduled for Friday and a grilling from frustrated European leaders expected later today ahead of the Group

60% A recent poll said that 60 per cent of Greeks were against the austerity measures, while other polls showed broad support for the remaining eurozone.

of 20 summit in Cannes.

After a seven-hour Cabinet meeting, government spokesman Ilias Mossialos said Papandreou's ministers expressed "total support for the initiatives taken by the prime minister." Government officials said two ministers still had strong reservations about the referendum.

Papandreou told his ministers that putting the issue to the Greek people was the only way to safeguard the European deal.

A referendum, he said, "will be a clear mandate, and a clear message within and outside of Greece, about our European course and our participation in the euro," he said.

World markets were hammered after Papandreou's surprise announcement amid fears the vote could unravel a deal which took European leaders months of complex negotiations among themselves and with banks to reach.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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PBO at odds on economy

The parliamentary budget officer has joined the growing chorus predicting slower growth for Canada next year with one of the more pessimistic outlooks for the economy, due to the turmoil over European debt.





The report by Kevin Page's office said growth this year should hit 2.2 per cent, which jibes with Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's last forecast, however Page's estimate was well below the minister's forecast of 2.1 per cent for 2012.

The economic outlook predicts that real GDP will expand by only 1.5 per cent

next year and 2.1 per cent in 2013. The PBO forecast follows one by the Bank of Canada last week that predicted the economy will advance 2.1 per cent this year, soften to 1.9 per cent in 2012 and pick up speed to 2.9 per cent in 2013.

PBO suggests that it's unlikely Flaherty can hit a balanced federal budget by 2014-15 and predicts a shortfall of \$18.7 billion. Last week, Flaherty did not commit to the four-year target, but insisted Ottawa is on track to eliminate the deficit "in the medium term." THE CANADIAN PRESS

**Market
moment**

TSX	Dollar
	
- 136.95 (12,115.10)	- 2.18¢ (98.15¢ US)
Oil	Natural gas
	
- \$1.00 US (\$92.19 US)	\$3.781 (- 15.0¢)
	Gold
	\$1,711.80 (- \$13.40)

Respect for referendum: Carney

► Bank of Canada governor says vote in Greece may build support needed for austerity

Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney says he respects the Greek prime minister's controversial call for a referendum on a new bailout package, saying the vote could be useful if it helps build support for necessary austerity.

But within hours, the question of whether such a vote would take place was up in the air as members of George Papandreou's government threatened to re-

volt over the surprise announcement.

That changed late yesterday, however, with his cabinet expressing unanimous support for the prime minister's surprise decision to call for a referendum on a hard-won European plan to rescue the Greek economy.

News of the referendum adds even more pressure on G20 leaders to bring a sense of calm to situation and restore market confi-

dence that policy-makers know what they are doing.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty described the situation as "fragile and uncertain," to the Commons finance committee.

Meanwhile, Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan said the impact of the Greek debt crisis on financial markets shows "how interdependent the world economies are."

Carney said that he still

expects bailout measures will contain the situation — "but that's different than resolving the issues, (which) ... is going to take years." Details still need to be ironed out and Europe must implement the initiatives, and there may still be additional measures needed, he cautioned.

Markets will be looking for G20 leaders to unveil more details at the two-day summit in Cannes, starting

Thursday, where Carney is to be confirmed as new head of the Financial Stability Board, placing the Canadian central banker at the forefront of measures to reform global financial markets.

Carney told the committee the European debt crisis remains the biggest concern for the global economy as well as Canada's.

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That's it.

I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore.

Today, the news wires are clogged with the pathetic denouement of the Kardashian

marriage. Kim, famous for nothing, dissolved her \$10-million wedding 72 days after she and collateral damage Kris Humphries collected a cool \$17.8 million for royalties from the vastly overblown event.

How do I know all this? All I had to do was go to my home page, iGoogle, and there were 2,968 Kardashian stories available for my edification.

At the same time Syria put land mines along the border with Lebanon, but that was a real yawner warranting a mere 360 articles. Do the math. That's 10 times more articles about Kim Kardashian than impending war between Syria and Lebanon.

This much ado about nothing comes at a time when journalists are whining about how our precious profession is being twittered to death by ducks. The truth is, what's really killing the news is a serious overdose of Kim Kardashian.

Of course, there wouldn't be any Kim Kardashian news if the public didn't want it. What's wrong with you people? Had enough of Jennifer Aniston?

Still, I wonder about all those otherwise grownup professionals who filed copy about the world's foremost phoney and her feckless boy-toy. It reminds me of the Richard Brautigan poem I Feel Horrible. She Doesn't: "I wander around the house like a sewing machine that's just finished sewing a turd to a garbage can lid."

As a protest against this outrage against humanity, I will Occupy the Internet until it stops.

I don't want to hear any more mealy mouthed arguments for "celebrity" journalism and "reality" TV, the Kardashian spawning ground.

I don't want to hear any more nonsense about how journalism is threatened by technology or the Mayan Calendar or global warming. It's threatened by bad choices. All we have to do is stop writing about Kim Kardashian. And other pointless phenomena.

I'm OK with confining Justin Bieber and Jennifer Aniston to the entertainment pages, although the actual form of entertainment has yet to be determined. But enough about Kim Kardashian's \$10-million phoney marriage, which could feed the one billion people on this planet who go hungry every night. That's just wrong.

I know, it's hard to Occupy the Internet, as that's the whole point of the Internet. There's no there there. But that doesn't stop Kim Kardashian, who does it every day.

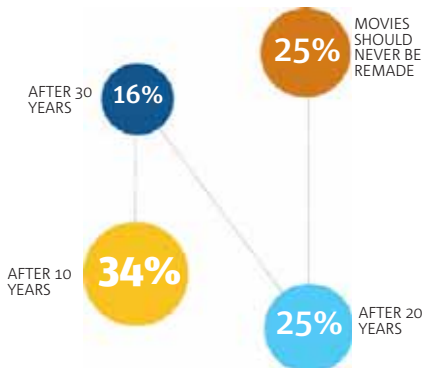
So it won't stop me either. This is my tent. I'm staying until they drag me away.

Read more of Paul Sullivan's columns at metronews.ca/justsayin



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How soon is too soon to remake a film?



Letters

Human sexuality is a wonderful and complex phenomenon and we can't always easily answer questions like "Am I gay?" or "Am I bisexual?" without deeper introspection. If you have identified your sexual orientation, and you are gay or lesbian, you may be struggling to come to terms with it.

In Dr. Richard Niolon's coming-out process he identifies five stages a person can follow:

1. Self-recognition as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT).
2. Disclosure to others.
3. Socialization with other LGBT.
4. Positive self-identification.
5. Integration and acceptance, where you are open about your sexuality to yourself, even if you prefer being discreet about it.

The most difficult part of this five-step program is Step 1 — acknowledging and accepting your sexual orientation.

While the Canadian law is extremely supportive of gay and lesbian rights, in the end, psychological and emotional support are equally important.

ALEX SANGHA
SOCIAL WORKER
DELTA, B.C.



► This photo titled **No Man is an Island** was submitted to the Relationships category by Louise Bourgeois from Ottawa.

photo of the day

Metro invites its readers to join the Metro Global Photo Challenge — running in 100 cities on four continents — to win fantastic prizes and world-wide recognition. Enter your digital photos at metrophotochallenge.com. The contest runs until Nov. 22. As well as a chance to win a trip to any city Metro publishes, one submission will also be featured here daily.

WEIRD NEWS

Resorts have gone to the dogs

You are spending the holidays with Aunt Nellie in Kansas. Your dog will be staying in a hotel suite called Neiman Barcus with a flat-screen TV. There might be surf lessons, catered meals, a massage, pawdicure, spa bath and photo shoot.

Boarding your pet has changed a lot over the past decade. If money is no object, there is no end to the extravagances you can order for your pet. The Barkley Pet Hotel & Day Spa — which really does have a Neiman Barcus suite — is a one-of-a-kind animal funhouse



► Yorkshire terrier
Betsey Johnson

in Westlake Village, northwest of Los Angeles. You can rent a Serenity Suite for \$44 a night or reserve a storefront suite on Rodeo Drive or Hollywood Boulevard (they start at \$72.50 a night). Add-ons include day-camp sessions, limousine pickup and delivery, surf lessons, charm school, a mud mask, obedience training, holiday fur-dyeing and filet mignon.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Putting the 'X' in Xmas

► It's been six years since their Guantanamo Bay adventure ► Harold and Kumar are back with ridiculous yuletide antics ► Watch as they burn down the Christmas tree and party with Jesus

IN FOCUS

RICHARD CROUSE
SCENE@METRONews.ca



The week after Halloween is a strange time to be writing about Christmas movies. Almost like cooking a Thanksgiving dinner in July.

But if department stores can display Lady Gaga masks beside Christmas ornaments and Hollywood can release *A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas* while we're still digesting our Halloween haul, I can write about some movies that put the tinsel in Tinsel Town.

Harold and Kumar isn't your average Christmas movie.

I doubt Jimmy Stewart would have considered burning down the family Christmas tree part of his wonderful Yuletide life, but Harold and Kumar aren't the first to put the X into Xmas.

Many movies are set at Christmastime — the Brat Packer flick *Less Than Zero* features an LA Yule, and *Die Hard* takes place on Christmas Eve — but I'm thinking of movies that use the holidays as a springboard for the action.

The raunchiest Christ-



► John Cho as Harold, left, Neil Patrick Harris as himself and Kal Penn as Kumar in *A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas*.

mas movie has to be *Bad Santa*, starring Billy Bob Thornton as a boozed-up, thieving department store Kris Kringle.

Unsentimental and crude, *Bad Santa* is bound to make the elves choke on their eggnog.

Dan Aykroyd also played a less than cuddly Santa in *Trading Places*. Drunk, disorderly and waving a gun around, he even has a fish hidden in his fake beard.

Unwrap *Mixed Nuts*, the 1994 Nora Ephron black comedy, and you'll find Christmas tree theft, lunatics and the worst Christmas gift ever: a dead body.

Staying up on Christmas Eve, waiting for Santa to come, will be easy after watching *Black Christmas*. You'll be too scared to sleep!

The tinsel terror about a mysterious killer in the attic is considered to be

the first modern slasher movie.

Gremlins mixes horror, humour and ho ho ho's. Set at Christmas, the story of little creatures who turn nasty when wet features a gory story about a missing father, a chimney, an overstuffed Santa suit and the punchline, "And that's how I found out there was no Santa Claus."

A very merry Crime Christmas can be had in both *The Ref* and *Reindeer*

Games.

In *The Ref*, cat burglar Dennis Leary soon regrets breaking into the home of squabbling couple Kevin Spacey and Judy Davis on Christmas Eve.

Reindeer Games sees Ben Affleck reluctantly rob a casino at Christmas.

The movie is such a lump of coal that one of its stars had this to say about it: "That was a bad, bad, bad movie," said Charlize Theron.

Taking the kiddie out of kids' books

Having never been a fan of traditional children's books, author Douglas Coupland decided it'd be fun to reinterpret the genre in a way that isn't suitable for most kids.

His new book *Highly Inappropriate Tales for Young People*, which he created with Canadian illustrator Graham Roumieu, probably won't be a big hit with parents. But Coupland says he would have loved to have read something like it when he was young.



► Douglas Coupland

"I never read kids books, I hated them, I sort of thought they pandered to you," Coupland said in an interview. "If I had found this book when I was a kid I would've been, 'Yes! This confirms everything I

"Kids books in general, I think, treat kids like they're dumb."

AUTHOR DOUGLAS COUPLAND

thought about adulthood! And I would've been quite happy, I think."

The book is more likely to be stocked in bookstores by Adam Mansbach and Ricardo Cortes' *Go the (Bleep) to Sleep*, than with with Dr. Seuss or Robert Munsch titles. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Evil characters

Coupland's seven short stories feature characters like Donald the Incredibly Hostile Juice Box, who is made up of a little fruit juice and sugar, but mostly evil.

- He lives to torment other juice boxes by stabbing their foil straw holes and spilling out their insides.
- Or there's Sandra the Truly Dreadful Babysitter, who continues to stay employed despite forcing children to shoplift and dabble in arson.

2

scene

Scene at a glance

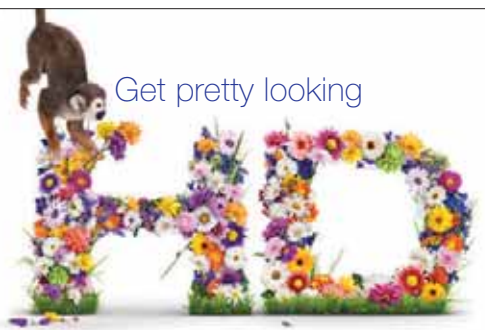


Jimmy Kimmel is going to be cracking jokes for the U.S. president. The White House Correspondents' Association says the Jimmy Kimmel Live! host will be the featured comedian at its 98th annual dinner next year. Kimmel said in a statement that he is looking forward to being part of the event on April 28, 2012, adding, "I love dinner."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



From Ugly Betty to foxy Roxie: America Ferrara to play the Chicago femme fatale in London



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DIVORCING THE KARDASHIANS

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA



Wait — you didn't really think we were done with Kim Kardashian, did you? Far from it, kupa-

cakes. When there's a four-hour reality TV special on your \$10 million wedding, you better believe there's weeks worth of gossip when you divorce 72 days later.

Humphries is 'devastated'

While Kim's statement was clearly written by her publicist while she went shopping, Humphries was a little less guarded: "I love my wife and am devastated to learn she filed for divorce," he said in a statement to E! News on Monday evening.

"I'm committed to this marriage and everything this covenant represents. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make it work."

Are we starting to ... feel bad for a member of the Kardashian family? Make this stop right now.

Won't somebody think of the diamonds?!

In the divorce filing, Kim asked that jewelry acquired during their mar-

We'll bite, Jess

After Kardashiagate broke, Jessica Simpson must have finally realized no one was going to pay her the \$500,000 she was hoping to score for her pregnancy announcement.

Monday night, she posted a photo of herself on her personal website in a tight mummy costume, holding her pregnant belly with the caption: "It's true, I'm going to be a mummy." Congrats, Jess — months ago.

riage remain hers, according to E! Online.

The actual pieces are unspecified, and we don't put it past this girl to accumulate some serious gems in 72 days. That said, we're pretty sure this has something to do with that \$2 million diamond on her finger.

Our favourite explanation

If we start explaining the divorce, are we implying that the marriage was real? No matter, this one is too good to pass up: Kim was annoyed that Humphries began "chasing fame" and trying to break into Hollywood, reports TMZ. Save it for your three-part "moving on" special, lady.

TODAY'S THE WORD IS WRITTEN BY
MONICA WEYMOUTH



Kim Kardashian

Celebrity tweets



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wears is
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Hit the slopes early

► With temperatures dropping and snow falling, early ski season never looked so good



SUSAN GREENWOOD
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

Two words: La Nina. It's a weather pattern, which simply put, dumps a ton of snow on North America — particularly in the north west and northern California. Last year it led to record snowfalls in many resorts — Mammoth saw 16.8 metres — while Fernie in British Columbia racked up 11 metres. If La Nina is back this year, and the signs are pointing to just that with colder-than-normal temperatures and heavy precipitation, then it's time to pick your resort.

Despite its relatively low altitude — the resort sits at 675 metres with the highest lift rising to 2,284 metres — Whistler, B.C., had a great season last year thanks to La Nina with 15.6 metres of snow falling.

Already the resort has seen remarkable snowfall with skiers riding the Blackcomb glacier as early as Oct. 6. Whistler is due to open on Nov. 24 and the resort is currently offering savings of up to 36 per cent on accommodation and lift pass packages if you book before Nov. 15. If it could get through the snow, that early bird could catch a great worm (whistlerblackcomb.com).

Keystone, Colo., will be throwing open its pistes on Nov. 4 with early-season skiers reaping the benefits of sophisticated snowmaking, sheltered tree runs and a superb snowpark without the crowds.

The resort shares the Epic pass with nearby



► The weather pattern La Nina is responsible for dumping tons of snow across North America. That's good news for powder hounds eager to hit the slopes.

Breckenridge, Beaver Creek, Vail and A-Basin so good snow is not hard to find (keystone.com).

Grand Targhee, Wyo. saw 14.8 metres fall last season and its dry powder is the stuff of legends. The resort is so confident you will love it, it even offers a refund on your liftpass

should your skiing be less than satisfactory (grandtarghee.com).

Alta, Utah has a base elevation of 2,600 metres, making skiing a definite possibility come Christmas, or before — it plans to open on Nov. 18 (alta.com).

If La Nina doesn't mate-

rialize you need a resort with good snowmaking, like Northstar-at-Tahoe, Calif. (northstaratahое.com). Not only has the resort increased its skiable terrain by 10 per cent this season, but 50 per cent of it is covered by snowmaking facilities, so powder turns are guaranteed.

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MOUNT BAKER Washington

► In 1999 Mt Baker held the record for the most snowfall in a season — 29 metres. Last year the small resort (only nine chairlifts) recorded 21.7 metres with 2.6 metres falling in November. Want powder? Head west. mtbaker.us



REVELSTOKE British Columbia

► With over 1,214 hectares of skiable area and North America's greatest vertical drop, this resort near Golden is a powder-hound Mecca. revelstokemountainresort.com

3

life

Travel in brief



Want first crack at the runs in Aspen? The Aspen Skiing Co. is offering an Ultimate Ski Pass that will let you have unlimited first tracks before chairlifts open to the public — for \$25,000. The exclusive passes also allow holders to meet members of the U.S. Women's Ski Team when they race in Aspen on the U.S. Thanksgiving weekend.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Gondola at Lake Louise ski resort to open for sightseeing rides this winter

Quick tips

EAT

► Empire Burger, in Breckenridge, Colo. is the perfect place to stop off mid-day: solid yet inventive burgers, decent prices and close to the bus stop. Job done. empireburger.com

STAY

► Located on British Columbia's 'Powder Highway' Revelstoke is the small resort with big powder stashes. If you've cash to splash the beautifully luxurious Bighorn lodge is new for 2011 and has its own spa, pool and 1,263 hectares of terrain on its doorstep. bighornrevelstoke.com



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DINNER EXPRESS

EMILY RICHARDS
FOOD@METRONEWS.CA



Here's a show-stopper dessert that uses delicious home-made

caramel to add some pizzazz in flavour. The caramel firms up to give a slightly chewy toffee-like texture to these tarts and becomes the perfect backdrop for the pumpkin mousse to sit on. Warm the remaining caramel sauce and drizzle it over the tarts before serving.

Caramel Pumpkin Spice Mousse Tarts

Preparation:

- In a high-sided heavy saucepan, stir together sugar and water over medium heat, stirring until dissolved. Increase heat to medium-high, cover and bring to a rolling boil. Uncover and boil, without stirring for about 10 minutes or until deep amber colour. Swirl pan as necessary to cook evenly. Remove from heat and slowly add hot cream. Stir with long-handled spoon until blended and bubbles subside.

2 Pour about 1 tbsp (15 ml) of the caramel into

Ingredients:

- 1 cup (250 ml) granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) water
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) hot whipping cream
- 12 baked tart shells
- Pumpkin Spice Mousse:
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) whipping cream
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) icing sugar
- 1 cup (250 ml) pumpkin or butternut squash puree
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) packed brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) each ground cinnamon and ginger
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) ground nutmeg

bottom of each baked tart shells. Refrigerate for 15 minutes or until



► This recipe makes 12 tarts.

caramel is set on top and reserve remaining caramel sauce.

3 In a large bowl, whip cream and icing sugar until they form stiff peaks. Using whisk, whisk in pumpkin, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg until no streaks remain. Scrape mousse into piping bag fitted with star tip, pipe into caramel-filled tart shells and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 1 day before serving.

Tip: If you don't have a piping bag, fill a resealable plastic bag and pipe in filling or spoon into prepared tart shells.

4 Warm remaining caramel sauce and drizzle tarts before serving.

EMILY RICHARDS IS A PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND A TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cocktail of the week

Pumpkin Pie Punch



This blend of spices, apple cider and ginger ale is delicious and rich, yet still refreshing. Leave it as is for kids, but add vodka or rum for an adult version.

- 1 can (398 ml/14 oz) pumpkin puree
- 250 ml (1 cup) packed dark brown sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) cinnamon
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground ginger
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) nutmeg
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cloves
- 2 l (8 cups) apple cider
- 2 l (8 cups) ginger ale

In a medium bowl, whisk together pumpkin, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves. Add apple cider and whisk until smooth and sugar is dissolved. Chill. In a punch bowl, gently stir together cider-pumpkin mixture and ginger ale. Serve with ice. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

► This traditional pumpkin pie shows its patriotic flavour with leaf-shaped pastry cut-outs as a fun crust

Classic Pumpkin Pie

Preparation:

- Heat oven to 230 C (450 F). Remove pie shells from freezer and let thaw at room temperature for 15 minutes.

2 Remove 1 pie shell from foil onto clean, flat, lightly floured work surface. If cracks appear in pastry, press together and repair using fingers moistened with water.

3 Cut out small leaf shapes using a small cookie cutter. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet and set aside.

4 In a large bowl, mix together brown sugar, salt

Ingredients:

- 2 frozen deep-dish pie shells
- 175 ml (3/4 cup) lightly packed brown sugar
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) salt
- 5 ml (1 tsp) cinnamon
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) ground nutmeg

and spices. Stir in remaining filling ingredients and beat until smooth. Pour into unbaked pie shell.

5 Bake pie and pastry cut-outs in preheated oven for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 180 C (350 F) and continue baking cut-outs for an additional 5 minutes or until golden brown.

- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) ground ginger
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) canned pureed pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) light (5 per cent) cream

Continue baking pie for 40 to 45 minutes or until knife inserted in the centre of the pie comes out clean.

6 Remove pie from oven and let cool. Top with pastry cut-outs just before serving.

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Have you made a major mistake?

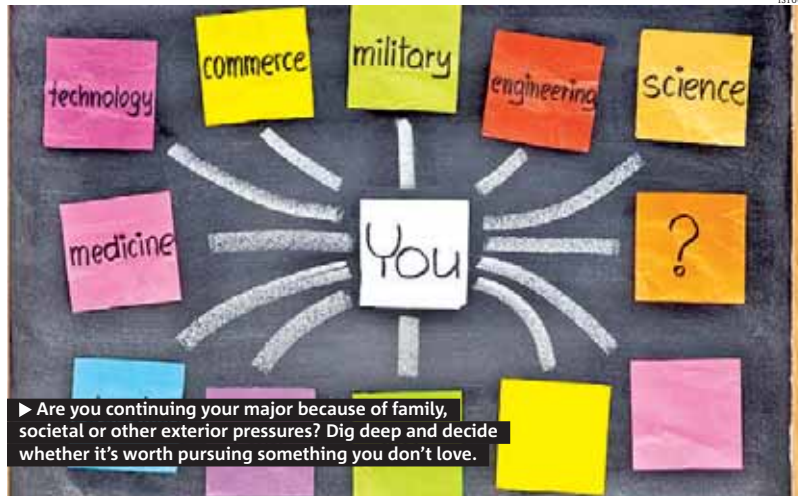
► You're sick of the subject you've chosen to study and contemplating a switch ► Take a moment to mull this over



Many students enter university knowing exactly what major they want to specialize in — at least they think they do.

But as students, we encounter new interests and challenges, giving us new-found perspective and knowledge. These insights can contradict existing notions and fall contrary to previous expectations.

I, for one, always knew that I wanted to study journalism, but I decided to enter university under another major so that I could work toward a greater understanding of my future program. In doing so, I built the proper knowledge, resources and



mind-set required for journalism school.

But switching majors is not as easy as it seems. As someone who switched majors during my under-

graduate degree, I know finding the right major for you can be difficult and overwhelming. There are many things to consider when doing so.

Meeting requirements

Each program has different requirements. Some programs are based on a grades-only application, whereas others require grades plus non-academic submissions, such as portfolios, or audio and tape submissions.

When I applied to Ryerson University's journalism program, I applied under the grades plus program, which required me to submit a select number

Not working out

If you find yourself in one of the following situations, you may want to consider switching majors:

- Failing the majority of your classes
- On academic probation more than once
- Always dropping classes
- Dreading school
- Unable to picture a career in your major

All-important advice:

- Being in the right major is crucial to your success and future opportunities, but remember that an education is what you make of it.
- Make an appointment with your academic co-ordinator or someone else who can help you weigh the pros and cons, and determine the best course of action.

of published works. I completed a lot of work outside school hours so that my portfolio would guarantee me acceptance into the program.

Switching to a more specialized program will demand a lot more than high grades. Additionally, if you are applying to a program that is in-demand, you should make sure that your grades surpass the minimum grade requirement to get into the program.

Researching the program

Before deciding to switch programs, it is necessary to research exactly what your intended field of study entails. You can never know too much, so do your homework prior to switching majors.

Seek resources within your school; talk to department heads, people at the career centre and anyone who can help guide you in the right direction.

Do your research and don't forget about the simple, yet crucial requirements, such as having a minimum number of field-related courses and making sure that you do not miss crucial deadlines for transferring.

Sacrifice

Most people forget about the sacrifices that come with switching majors.

When you decide to transfer programs you are agreeing to forfeit your existing major. Since program requirements vary, this could mean that the one or two years spent in your program will essentially be discredited and not counted toward your new major.

It also means having to start from scratch again. I was extremely happy to switch programs and be able to study my true calling. I was, however, a little disappointed when I realized that all my hard work was not going to be accounted for. It is a difficult reality to grapple with, especially if you are someone who wants to finish school as quickly as possible, or if you face major financial constraints.

Then there are other minor inconveniences such as the transfer process, which can be difficult and laborious. There are many forms to fill, fees to pay and places to drop things off to.

Ultimately, however, you have to be in a major that is complementary to your abilities and preferences. If you are unhappy with what you are studying, it is not worth spending your time and money continuing.

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4
sports

‘It’s a good test for us’

After strong start to season, Renney and Oilers prepare for lengthy November road trip

The Edmonton Oilers have been an early surprise this NHL season thanks, in part, to a favourable home schedule. Now, they’re about to find out how their act plays on the road.

With five straight wins in a stretch when they’ve played eight of 11 games at Rexall Place, the Oilers open November with six games away from home. The first stop is Los Angeles to take on the Kings tomorrow.

It’s an extended annual trip — the Canadian Finals Rodeo takes over Rexall Place every November — that always challenges the Oilers (7-2-2). No partisan crowds. No favourable last-change match-ups for the coaching staff. No home cooking.

“It’s a good test for us,” coach Tom Renney said. “I think that we have to embrace it, obviously. It’s an opportunity to continue to grow as a team and see if



A six-game road trip will be a test for young offensive stars Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, second from left, and Taylor Hall.

we can sustain good work habits and a winning approach.”

Can veteran goaltender Nikolai Khabibulin stay hot? Will the Kid Line of Taylor Hall, rookie Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Jordan Eberle continue to fill the net? Will special teams remain a difference-maker? Can Ryan Smyth continue to turn back the clock?

As the saying goes, this

is where the rubber meets the road.

Coming off back-to-back last-place finishes, the rebuilding Oilers — who sit atop the Northwest Division with 16 points — have lots of hockey to play before they can parlay a promising start into meaningful movement in the standings.

“It’s going to be very important for the whole team,” said Nugent-Hop-

kins, who leads NHL rookies with 11 points. “We’re going to need to get some really big wins in some hard buildings to play in.”

With stops in Los Angeles, Phoenix, Montreal, Boston, Detroit and Chicago, this trip represents new ground for the 18-year-old Nugent-Hopkins, who is on a point-a-game pace with five goals and six assists.

“It’s my first chance to

see all these different buildings,” he said. “It’s going to be cool seeing the different atmospheres, but the biggest thing we need to do is go out and get a few wins.”

Khabibulin, 38, who struggled mightily last season, has looked like a new man in seven appearances. He has five wins and two overtime losses. Khabibulin was awarded the NHL’s third star for the month of October and leads all goaltenders with a 1.12 goals-against average and .960 saves percentage. With Khabibulin and Devan Dubnyk splitting duties, the Oilers have allowed just 18 goals.

“Any way you want to say it, it’s important to have good goaltending,” said Khabibulin. “A lot of times, the difference is one goal and we’ve been in some of those games already.”

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted



“I have gained a better understanding (of) how I need to continue to play the game to help my team win.”

DETROIT LIONS DEFENSIVE TACKLE NDAMUKONG SUH, AFTER MEETING WITH NFL COMMISSIONER ROGER GOODELL AND HIS STAFF YESTERDAY TO CLARIFY QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS PLAY AND THE GAME. SUH REQUESTED THE BYE-WEEK SESSION IN NEW YORK AT NFL HEADQUARTERS TO TALK ABOUT THE FLAGS AND FINES HE HAS RECEIVED.



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Division. Rivals



► Vancouver's Chris Higgins scores a first-period goal on Flames goalie Miikka Kiprusoff in Calgary last night.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Luongo solid as Canucks crush Flames

Vancouver defenceman Alexander Edler scored and added two assists and Roberto Luongo made 28 saves as the Canucks routed the Calgary Flames 5-1 last night. Chris Higgins, Alexandre Burrows, Daniel Sedin and Cody Hodgson also scored for Vancouver (6-5-1), which kicked off a six-game road trip. Alex Tanguay scored the lone goal for Calgary (4-5-1), ruining Luongo's shutout bid with 32 seconds left in the game. Luongo was coming off a miserable October in which he went 3-3-1 with a 3.54 goals-against average and a meagre .869 save percentage.

Offensive overflow gives Oilers options

THE HOCKEY NEWS

RYAN KENNEDY

EDMONTON@METRONEWS.CA



Oh, to be the Edmonton Oilers right now. Sitting atop the Northwest Division,

heading out on a character-building road trip with a hot veteran goalie and two

scoring lines firing on all cylinders ... and the tank's not even empty.

Two chips still in play for the Oilers right now are assets that are currently underused, meaning, should the current hot streak halt, there are immediate remedies.

The first is, admittedly, tenuous at best. That would be the return of sublime playmaking right-winger Ales Hemsky, whose bum shoulder has limited him to two games in this magical

opening. Should the talented Czech return, he is yet another arrow in an increasingly potent quiver at coach Tom Renney's disposal. Hemsky's history suggests an approach of "a lot of games would be appreciated, but not really expected," so his contributions are truly getting to the bonus stage.

A more tangible asset is centre Sam Gagner, currently finding his name attached to trade rumours involving the New Jersey

Devils. Gagner has flatlined after a great rookie campaign in 2007-08 and with the ascension of Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and with Shawn Horcoff playing quite well in the top six, there's no scoring-line job left for Gagner.

Also coming off an injury, Gagne (ankle sprain) is a much safer commodity than Hemsky, albeit one with less of an offensive ceiling. Nonetheless, the Devils are apparently interested.

At this point in the rebuild, offering Edmonton draft picks is almost laughable, unless the Oilers intend on packaging those selections at a later date for a player who can help now. The blue-line corps — though goals against have been an impressive strength so far — could use some bulking up, and while the Devils don't have much in the way of defensive dynamism to offer, a steady hand would be appreciated, particularly one coming

from the school of New Jersey general manager Lou Lamoriello.

The old yarn about not fixing something that ain't broken won't spin in Edmonton. The Oilers have put themselves in a great position right now and with a tough schedule ahead, complacency is not an option. If Edmonton GM Steve Tambellini can get an asset from the mediocre Devils for Gagner, now is the perfect time to pull the trigger.



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© 2011 Mercedes-Benz Canada Inc. 2012 C 350 Sedan shown, National MSRP \$49,000. **Total price of \$39,312 and down payment include freight/PDI of \$1,995, dealer admin fee of \$495, air-conditioning levy of \$100, EHF tires, filters, batteries of \$16.00 and AMVIC fee of \$6.25. *Lease and finance offers based on the all-new 2012 C 250 Sedan available only through Mercedes-Benz Financial Services on approved credit for a limited time. Lease example based on \$348 per month for 36 months. Down payment or equivalent trade of \$7,592 plus security deposit of \$400 and applicable taxes due at lease inception. MSRP starting at \$36,700. Lease APR of 3.9% applies. Total obligation is \$20,535. 18,000 km/year allowance (\$0.20/km for excess kilometres applies). Finance example is based on a 60-month term and a finance APR of 1.9% and an MSRP of \$36,700. Monthly payment is \$556 (excluding taxes) with \$6,282 down payment or equivalent trade in. Cost of borrowing is \$1,559 for a total obligation of \$39,621. Vehicle licence, insurance, registration and PPSA (if applicable) are extra. Dealer may lease or finance for less. Offers may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. See your authorized Mercedes-Benz dealer for details or call the Mercedes-Benz Customer Relations Centre at 1-800-387-0100. *Available on select models. Offer ends November 30, 2011.

Engine

Very little has changed beneath the hood of both gasoline-engine Camrys, although Toyota now rates the standard-issue 178-horsepower 2.5-litre four-cylinder at 8.2 l/100 km in the city and 5.6 on the highway, compared to the 2011 model's 9.0/6.0 numbers. Meanwhile, the carryover 268-horsepower 3.5-litre V-6 achieves a claimed 9.7/6.4 city/highway, compared with 10.6/6.8 before.

Interior

The interior is where this Camry makes a definitive statement. The organically-shaped dashboard presents a layered appearance and lacks the former droopy look.

As well, the dash and control panel's shiny bits added to up-level models are tastefully done. Buyers can now choose from four different upholstery finishes, depending on the model, from woven fabric on base models to leather with faux suede seat covers at the luxury end of the scale.

Gas-saving Hybrid

Easily the most impressive fuel-efficiency gain originates from the new Camry Hybrid. Toyota has installed a 156-horsepower 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine that replaces the 147-horse 2.4-litre. The 2.5 functions in tandem with an electric motor. Most importantly, fuel-economy numbers improve to 4.5 l/100 km in the city and 4.9 highway, versus 5.7 city and highway for the 2011 Hybrid. Additionally, the more compact battery system located behind the rear seat means more trunk space.



What you always get in a Camry ... and more



It has been a rocky road for the Toyota faithful as the company recovers from natural disaster and a rash of very public — and extensive — recalls that threw into question its normally cut-above-the-rest reputation.

So, the question is whether the new seventh-

generation Camry and Camry Hybrid will get you down to the dealership to sign on the dotted line.

Honestly, it should, based on a number of key incremental improvements to fuel economy and interior quality in particular.

Despite the best efforts of the Honda Accord, Chevrolet Malibu and Hyundai Sonata, the Cam-

ry has owned the numero uno spot outright for the past decade.

And it has managed this feat by playing it safe with styling, steadily improving its safety and technology features and offering its loyal owners plenty of cabin comfort and refinement.

For 2012, the Camry's oh-so-subtle physical changes include a pointier

front end, chiselled front fenders and an accent crease extending across the doors and fenders.

Compared to a similarly contented 2011 base model, the list price has been reduced by \$1,600. You might consider that a return-to-full-strength bonus, however for the conservative Camry, saving money is always in fashion.

Toyota Camry

- **Type:** Four-door, front-wheel-drive mid-size sedan.
- **Engines (hp):** 2.5-litre DOHC I4 (178); 3.5-litre DOHC V6 (268); 2.5-litre DOHC I4 (156) combined with 105-kilowatt electric motor (200 net combined).
- **Transmissions:** Six-speed automatic; continuously variable (Hybrid).

By comparison

Ford Fusion

Base price: \$21,600
Popular four-door offered with manual gearbox, plus fuel-sipping hybrid version.

Honda Accord

Base price: \$26,200
Comfy cabin plus excellent road manners makes this a fun-to-drive sedan.

2013 Chevrolet Malibu

Base price: \$25,000 (est.)
New sedan has four cylinders and a part-hybrid model.

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The Volt's true colours

► How does Chevrolet's much-hyped car fare on real roads?

GARRY SOWERBY
FOR WHEELBASE MEDIA

I hate to see the end of summer. Days grow shorter and thoughts of winter weather fouling my ability to putter with a car in the driveway after work have a haunting effect.

But one consolation of the onset of winter is autumn, when skies are clear, humidity is a memory and leaves on the trees flash the countryside into a pallet of colours that takes the breath away.

This autumn I decided to treat my wife, Lisa Calvi, to a Fall Colours road trip and what better place to do it than New England, where back roads and small towns are alive with crisp mornings and splendid fall foliage.

And what better car to drive than a 2012 Chevy Volt, the electric vehicle Chevy is just rolling out in Canada.

It would also be a chance to see if this car, with its so-called "extended-range" capability, can cut it on a backcountry road trip. The meandering route would run about 600 kilometres from Burlington, Vt., to Bar Harbor, Me. There were a few kilometre-



► Note the beautiful fall foliage of New England.

tres of Interstate, but the Volt would spend most of its time on secondary roads.

The basis of Volt's mobility is no secret. It's powered by a 149-horse electric motor. The large T-shaped battery below the floor provides enough juice to get the stylish four-passenger sedan about 65 kilometres, at which point an onboard 1.4-litre gasoline engine

fires up to generate the electricity to extend the range another 500-plus kilometres (the Volt costs about \$42,500 to start).

Although the system adds significant weight and cost to the car, this is somewhat offset by the elimination of that nasty side effect other electric vehicles are cursed with: range anxiety.

No pesky feelings in the pit of your stomach that



► The Volt is the only electric on the market that will cover 600 kilometres in two days. And there's no "range anxiety."

you are running out of propulsion and the only way to get it back is to find a place to plug in and wait hours until the battery is recharged.

Fact is the Volt's main competitor, the Nissan Leaf, would never be able to take a 600-kilometre two-day road trip because it would require about three full days of charging using a household plug-in.

Lisa and I fly into Burlington, Vt., and pick up the Crystal Red Volt. It's fully charged and we drive to Topnotch Resort in Stowe, Vt., on electric power. It's peppy, quiet, comfortable and handles surprisingly well on the back roads.

That night, after plugging into a 110-volt outlet in the parking lot, we dis-

cuss our options over a romantic dinner. Neither of us has ever driven to the top of New Hampshire's Mount Washington, although I've seen those "This car climbed Mount Washington" bumper stickers for decades.

The next morning we pass on the many activities available at the cosy Topnotch Resort.

So much for the horseback riding, fall hikes, the corn maze or getting pampered at the resort's full service spa.

We're off and half way to our overnight destination I realize the Volt's gas-powered generator has taken over and I didn't even notice.

Turn down the prerequisite road-trip companion XM Radio and I can hear

the engine slightly at times.

The next day, we need to drive about 350 kilometres to get to Bar Harbor on the Atlantic Ocean.

Who cares if we can only get half way up Mount Washington because of freezing rain and icy roads? Who cares if the sun is not shining and Hurricane Irene has ransacked the fall foliage? The Volt has taught this old road warrior a thing or two about the future.

Chevy's answer to the Little Black Dress of vehicles, the Volt, makes it possible to be environmentally conscious, cut down on fossil-fuel consumption and not need a second car when the call of the open road needs answering.

2012 Porsche Cayenne Canada MSRP. Porsche recommends seatbelts usage and observance of all traffic laws at all times. Optional equipment shown is extra.



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► The BMW 1 Series M Coupe won Best New Sports/Performance Car over \$50,000 in AJAC's TestFest 2012 Canadian Car of the Year Awards last week.



KOREAN AND GERMAN BRANDS DOMINATE AJAC'S 2012 COMPETITION

AUTO PILOT



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The envelope please.

No, not that one. It's from Parking Tag Operations and I don't need to see it. Yes, the other one, which reveals the "Best New" vehicles for 2012, as adjudicated by the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC).

Hopefully by now everyone is already well aware of AJAC's annual TestFest — one of the most unique and thorough "car of the year" evaluation programs on the planet. The 2012 model-year edition just wrapped up last week in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., and if you scan the list of category winners, you'll notice that Korean and German brands dominate.

But there were many close races...

In Small Car Over \$21K, winner Hyundai Elantra beat out second-place Ford Focus by only five points (695 vs. 690). Focus beat Elantra on several counts, notably cargo, acceleration and safety, but with an as-tested price several thousands of dollars above the Elantra, it couldn't overcome the price factor.

AJAC applies a price fac-

Winners

AJAC "Best New" Category Winners for 2012

- **Small Car Under \$21K**
Hyundai Accent
- **Small Car Over \$21K**
Hyundai Elantra
- **Family Car Under \$30K**
Kia Optima LX
- **Family Car Over \$30K**
Hyundai Sonata Hybrid
- **Luxury Car**
Mercedes-Benz C-Class C350 4Matic
- **Sports & Performance Under \$50K**
Hyundai Veloster
- **Sports & Performance Over \$50K**
BMW 1 Series M Coupe
- **Prestige Over \$75K**
Mercedes-Benz S-Class S350 BlueTEC 4Matic
- **SUV Under \$35K**
Dodge Journey
- **SUV Over \$35-\$60K**
VW Touareg TDI
- **SUV Over \$60K**
BMW X3

tor to each vehicle, on the assumption that a higher-priced vehicle should be better. The price factor is different for each category; it plays a bigger role in price-sensitive categories like compact, and less so in categories like luxury and prestige, etc.

On the podium for Family Car Over \$30K were two hybrids, Optima and Sonata, and the electric Chevrolet Volt. The Volt garnered an almost perfect fuel score, and huge marks for engine smoothness, but with an as-tested price of \$44,673, it was thousands more than both Korean hybrids.

Chrysler 300S trailed the

Luxury winner, Mercedes-Benz C-Class C350 4Matic, by only four points. The 300S was surprisingly sporty, but so was the C350, which was also super solid in every other parameter.

Mercedes-Benz also won in Prestige (S Class S350 BlueTEC). But many journalists were mesmerized by third-place finisher, Jaguar XKR-S — the fastest and most powerful production sports car ever produced by Jaguar. Too narrowly focused and pricey, to prevail this year, but my goodness she flies and is easy on the eyes.

BMW 1 Series M Coupe had the biggest margin of victory of any category winner this year (16 points).

There were only three entries in the SUV Under \$35 category this year, and all of them came from Chrysler. But Dodge Journey's win over Jeep Wrangler and Jeep Compass is not a shallow one — it achieved a relatively high SUV score (652).

In the SUV \$35-\$60K category, voters were clearly smitten with the styling and capability of the Range Rover Evoque, but the VW Touareg TDI prevailed with better cargo capacity and its super-stellar diesel powertrain.

Over in SUV Over \$60K, BMW X3 beat out its next closest rival, Mercedes-Benz M Class, by only two points.

Two points was the same slim margin of victory for Hyundai Accent over Kia Rio5 in Small Car Under \$21K.

They share a platform so we shouldn't be surprised that if one did well, the other would too.

Voting for the MVP

► TestFest enables journalists to determine Car of the Year



DAVID SINGH
METRO DRIVE EDITOR

Chances are you've come across the title before. Whether it's in a television commercial, a newspaper, or on the Internet, you've probably seen a vehicle that's been coined the Canadian Car of the Year.

But have you ever wondered how cars attain such an honour?

An award that is certainly earned, the Car of the Year is determined by members of the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC).

Over 70 of those journalists were in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., last week to take part in TestFest, an annual event that allows the media to vote on the best new vehicles available to Canadian consumers.

According to Jacques Deshaies, a director on the Canadian Car of the Year Awards committee, TestFest provides an opportunity for effective evaluation of new vehicles because of the large number of journalists that attend.

"There are car launches during the year for new products, but a manufacturer will only invite a few journalists to the launches," Deshaies said. "Here at TestFest you have all the (certified) Canadian auto journalists in the same place, on the same week, at the same time."

At TestFest the vehicles are put through a thorough evaluation system by journalists. AJAC members will compare each vehicle in its class, one-by-one, until every car has been driven.

The same routes — public roads included — must be used for each vehicle in a category, while testing rules are consistent from year to year so consumers can get an accurate portrait of how a car compares to previous models.

The media use a detailed rating form that judges various aspects of a vehicle, from exterior styling right down to braking feel and effectiveness.

And these ratings are taken seriously, as accounting firm KPMG tabulates the ballots.

While the top vehicles in each of the 11 categories were announced on Friday, the overall 2012 Canadian Car of the Year has already been voted on by AJAC members and will be unveiled at the Toronto Auto Show in February.

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Looking for a second-hand family hauler crossover?

The second-generation Kia Sportage is worth a check.

It's a five-seat compact ute that was available with four or six-cylinder power.

Sizing was in roughly the same ballpark as the Honda CR-V, Toyota RAV4 and Ford Escape.

The second-generation Sportage's lifespan on our shores ran from model years 2005 to 2009, with a mandatory makeover and refresh part way through.

2005 to '09 Kia Sportage



Engine

Look for a two-litre, 140-horsepower four-cylinder or a 2.7-litre V-6 with 173. Automatic or manual transmissions and front or four-wheel drive were available.



What owners like

Sportage owners enjoy a sturdy ride, compact handling and parking dynamics, confidence on slippery roads and plenty of real-world versatility. Overall interior and exterior styling are also rated highly, as is fuel efficiency with the four-cylinder engine.



What owners dislike

Complaints tend to centre mainly around poor engine performance, bare-bones equipment levels on low-end models, and excessive wind-noise at higher speeds.



Common issues

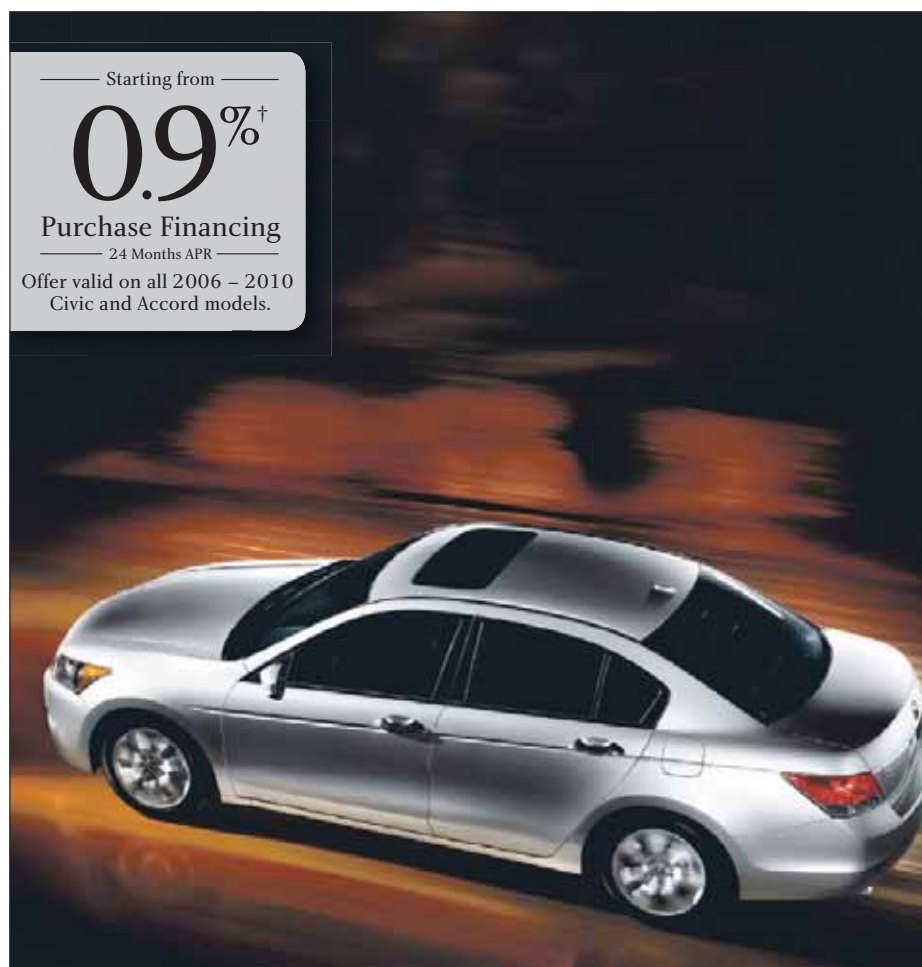
Ensure the cruise control and air conditioning work properly.

If the engine seems to "sputter" or deliver power in a "lumpy" fashion, the culprit could be a clogged fuel filter or a bad engine control sensor. Note that a mechanic can scan the engine computer for potential engine sensor issues.

Models with the automatic transmission that shift harshly or abruptly could be suffering from a computer-related problem as well.

Verdict

Where reliability is concerned, the Sportage looks like a solid second-hand bet. Thanks to relatively low resale values, one won't be required to sever an appendage when it comes time to pay.



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Limited time Purchase Financing offer on Honda Certified Used Civic and Accord models available through Honda Financial Services, on approved credit. Offer only available up to 24 months on Honda Certified Used Honda Civic and Accord (2006-2010 model years). Finance example based on 2006 Civic model: \$10,000 at 0.9% per annum equals \$420.58 per month for 24 months. Cost of borrowing is \$94.02 for a total obligation of \$10,094.02. Taxes, license, insurance, registration and fees are not included. See your Honda dealer for full details. Dealer may sell for less. Additional financing offers available on 36, 48, 60 and 72 months. Offer expires December 31, 2011.

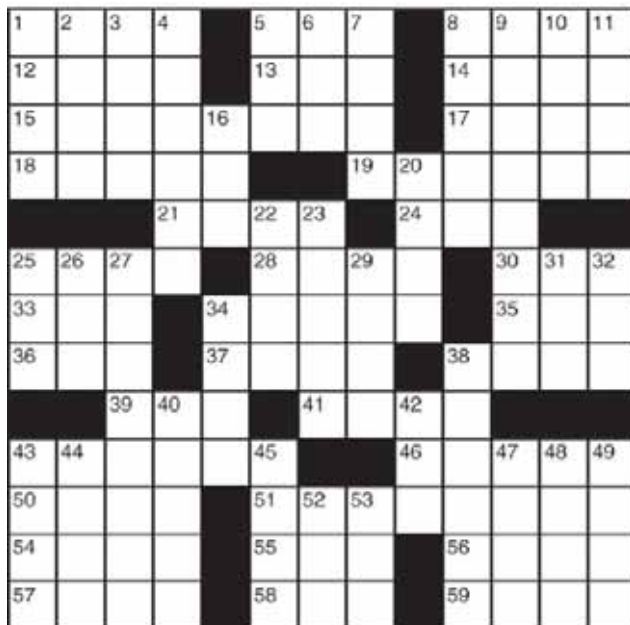
Crossword

Across

- 1 — and crafts
5 Life story, for short
8 Rim
12 Jump
13 Toss in
14 Caboose's position
15 Excited commotion
17 Muhammad and Laila
18 TV oldie, "Kate & —"
19 Used-car deal, e.g.
21 Small barrel
24 Kitten's call
25 Snatch
28 Places
30 Carte lead-in
33 Tackle moguls
34 Gold measure
35 In medias —
36 Crony
37 Basin accessory
38 Pelican's pride
39 Indivisible
41 Mimic
43 Ivanhoe's love
46 Bra seller's man-nequin
50 "Sad to say, ..."
51 Lunchbox item, often
54 Catcher's aid
55 Snoop
56 Run-down residential area
57 Cookware
58 Moment
59 "Desire Under the —"

- 4 Repair, as film
5 Scrooge's cry
6 Altar affirmative
7 Smell
8 Obliterate
9 First State
10 Author Sheehy
11 Gaelic
16 Verily
20 Send out
22 Cabbage salad
23 "M*A*S*H" setting
25 Recipe meas.
26 Alias (Abbr.)
27 Electric power unit
29 Complain repeat-

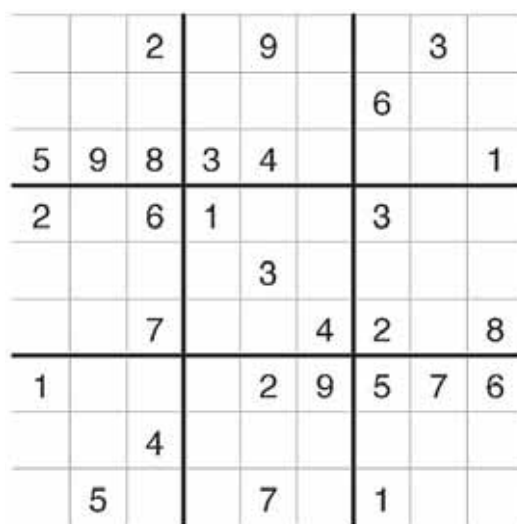
- edly
31 Meadow
32 Request
34 Acute
38 Shop aimlessly
40 Birds' homes
42 Schedule abbr.
43 Freeway access
44 Hodgepodge
45 Venomous vipers
47 Streamlet
48 Icky pond surface
49 Resistance units
52 Exist
53 Big Apple letters



► Yesterday's answer



Sudoku



How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ►

3	7	9	1	4	2	8	5	6
1	6	4	3	8	5	2	9	7
2	8	5	7	6	9	4	1	3
8	4	6	9	7	1	5	3	2
5	1	3	6	2	8	7	4	9
9	2	7	4	5	3	6	8	1
6	3	2	8	9	4	1	7	5
4	5	1	2	3	7	9	6	8
7	9	8	5	1	6	3	2	4

A look at the weather

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Min -1° Max 12°	Min -2° Max 6°	Min -9° Max -4°

Michele McDougall Weather Specialist

"My favourite part is reporting the weather. It fascinates me, and as we know around here, it's always changing, keeping forecasters on their toes". WEEKDAYS 5:30 AM



Today's horoscope

- ♈ **Aries** March 21-April 20 You have no fear at the moment and will follow your desires wherever they might lead.
♉ **Taurus** April 21-May 21 Don't give away what should remain yours.
♊ **Gemini** May 22-June 21 Cosmic activity in your opposite sign encourages you to accept that other people's opinions and your opinions differ in legitimate ways.
♋ **Cancer** June 22-July 22 Watch out you don't get carried away with your own brilliance today.
♌ **Leo** July 23-Aug. 23 Today's cosmic developments will do wonders

- for your confidence and encourage you to believe that anything is possible.
♍ **Virgo** Aug. 24-Sept. 22 You may not be the most emotional member of the zodiac but you will feel deeply for someone today.
♎ **Libra** Sept. 23-Oct. 23 There is a danger that in your eagerness to get ahead and get the most from each and every situation you will overlook some small but important detail.
♏ **Scorpio** Oct. 24-Nov. 22 It's not like you to be free and easy with money but you are in one of those moods where you really

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

- don't care
♐ **Sagittarius** Nov. 23-Dec. 21 You need a challenge that will bring out the best in you
♑ **Capricorn** Dec. 22-Jan. 20 There is no limit to what you can accomplish now
♒ **Aquarius** Jan. 21-Feb. 18 What happens over the next two or three days will open your eyes to new possibilities
♓ **Pisces** Feb. 19-March 20. You must play by the rules today, even if you know you can get away with cutting corners.
● SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest



WIN! You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image above and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.



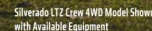
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[illegible]

25 MPG HIGHWAY
11.4 L/100 KM HWY | 15.9 L/100 KM CITY

34 MPG HIGHWAY
8.4 L/100 KM HWY | 12.7 L/100 KM CITY*

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